



Peter Prejudice's Breeches: An Anti-Federalist Perspective

Purpose of the Lesson:

A complement to a lesson covering the Federalists and their influence over the Constitutional Convention, this lesson is intended to help students understand the Anti-Federalist perspective. By the conclusion of this lesson, students should be able to explain the differences between Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Students will be able to assess and sort both perspectives and identify the importance of Anti-Federalist views in shaping the Constitution as we know it.

Critical Engagement Question:

Who were the Anti-Federalists? How did their opinions contribute to the development of our federal Constitution?

Overview of the Lesson:

This lesson will explore the Anti-Federalist perspective through a reading of a newspaper article published by a leading Anti-Federalist during the Ratification period. The article, "Peter Prejudice: The New Breeches (April 15th, 1788)" will serve as the basis for this lesson, where a post-group reading assignment will help students articulate the ideas of the Anti-Federalists. As a warm-up for a reading of "Peter Prejudice," students will first be asked to read from Federalist No. 1 as a way to reintroduce and revisit the ideas of the Federalists. This will help students to separate the ideas of the Federalists and of the Anti-Federalists. During a class reading of the "Peter Prejudice" document, you should periodically pause the class to gather a list of Anti-Federalist perspectives brought up in the reading. Following the class reading, students will complete an assignment in small groups to draw a picture of Peter's new breeches, reflecting the Anti-Federalist perspective.

Lesson Objectives:

This lesson uses a newspaper article published by an Anti-Federalist during the Ratification period, "Peter Prejudice: The New Breeches (April 15, 1788)." The article illustrates the perspective of the Anti-Federalists and demonstrates the contentious issues regarding the proposed Constitution. Not everyone during the time agreed with the Framers' actions in the Federal (Constitutional) Convention or the government they designed.

1. Students will be able to identify the perspective of the Anti-Federalists.
2. Students will understand that the Anti-Federalists were not the "bad guys," but had reasonable opposition to the new Constitution.
3. Students will be able to discuss the extent to which the US Constitution is a product of both Federalist and Anti-Federalist values.

Standards:

Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts, Literacy in History/Social Studies, 6-8 Grades

1. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
2. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.10 By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
3. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
4. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Materials:

1. Print off
 - A. Individual colored images of the newspaper article, “Peter Prejudice: The New Breeches (April 15, 1788),” found here (<http://consource.org/document/peter-prejudice-the-new-breeches-1788-4-15/>). From the transcription page, click the small source image to access the large pdf. Because it is a newspaper article, it is not handwritten and students can read from the actual image of the document, increasing their historical exploration experience.
 - B. Individual transcript of Federalist No. 1, found here: <http://consource.org/document/the-federalist-no-1-1787-10-27/>
2. Students will need loose-leaf paper and writing utensils to draw Peter Prejudice and his breeches.
3. You will need a means to create and display a collaborative list of Anti-Federalist values (blackboard, whiteboard, large butcher block paper, etc).

Time and Grade Level:

One 50 minute class period in Grade 8 Social Studies classrooms

Warm-up for the Lesson:

Prior to commencing the class reading and activity, students should complete a reading of Federalist No. 1, to assist a short discussion about Federalist thought. Students should be sent home the evening before this lesson with the task of reading and taking notes on a specific section of Federalist No. 1 (groups of students should each be assigned different sections of the document, to encourage careful reading and assist in comprehension). At the beginning of this lesson, students should share what they understood from the reading, to draw up a list of Federalist values. This warm-up activity should also include the introduction of relevant terms to

the “Peter Prejudice” readings. This warm-up activity is particularly relevant if the class has not yet completed an in-depth study of the Federalist perspective.

Teachers should prepare for this lesson by reviewing Federalist No. 1 and the annotated copy of “Peter Prejudice” found in Appendix A.

Teacher & Student Warm-up:

See Appendix A. for an annotated copy of “Peter Prejudice” for a teacher warm-up

See Appendix B. for the transcripts of Federalist No. 1 with suggested group reading assignments for students

Recommended Vocabulary Warm-up for Students:

Display these key terms on a projected power point screen as you discuss Federalist No.1 and prepare for the activity

Breeches [brich-iz]—knee-length pants or trousers, commonly worn by men and boys during the time of the Constitution’s ratification.

Consolidation—the result of combining or merging to create a new identity.

Anti-Federalist—an opponent to the ratification of the United States Constitution.

Federalist—a proponent of ratification of the United States Constitution.

Activity:

Setting up the Classroom

As this lesson requires a class reading and collaboration as well as a small group break-out requiring reading, writing and drawing, an appropriate desk set-up may be small tables of 4 desks oriented towards the board or butcher block paper.

Students’ Instructions

As we read through, “Peter Prejudice: The New Breeches,” think about the arguments Peter makes about his Breeches and how these reflect/represent to the ideas of the Anti-Federalists toward the proposed Constitution. Think of how you will draw Peter Prejudice wearing his new breeches and how the characteristics of his breeches relate to the arguments of the Anti-Federalists. As we read the article, everyone should try to come up to the board at least once to list an Anti-Federalist argument discovered in the Article.

Teacher’s Instructions

1. Spend the First 10-15 minutes discussing the students' reading of Federalist No. 1 the previous night and draw up a list of Federalist arguments. During this time, make sure to discuss the "Terms to Know" listed above in the student warm-up.
2. Distribute the "Peter Prejudice" article. As you hand out copies, be clear with students that the article serves as a metaphor for Anti-Federalist thought and that Peter's "breeches" are actually the Constitution or plan of government proposed by the Federalists.
3. Complete a "popcorn-style" reading of the "Peter Prejudice" article. As you read, be sure to periodically stop the class and ask for students to identify Anti-Federalist arguments or highlight Anti-Federalist views which may have been missing from this particular document. (20 minutes)

*As you read the article as a class, make a list on the board of the Anti-Federalists' arguments.

The Framers in the Federal (Constitutional) Convention were given instructions by their states to amend the Articles of Confederation. They went beyond their authorization.

The Federalists argued that if there was something about the proposed plan the people did not like they could amend it, but Anti-Federalists did not want to ratify it without a declaration of rights.

The Anti-Federalists believed the new government consolidated the states because the supremacy clause in Article VI gave the federal government ultimate authority over the states.

The Anti-Federalists feared the new proposed government was an elected form of tyranny (they just won a war against a tyrant).

4. After completing the popcorn reading, have students turn to their tablemates (or small groups) and draw Peter Prejudice wearing his new breeches. Label at least 3 characteristics of his breeches and how these relate to the arguments of the Anti-Federalists against the proposed Constitution. (15 Minutes)

Once students complete their drawings, have a representative from each group come up to the front of the class to present their version of Peter's Breeches. If no more class time remains to do so in the first class, this activity might be completed at the beginning of the next class (perhaps as a transition into another lesson on the Bill of Rights).

Homework:

If students do not complete their drawings of Peter Prejudice's breeches during the in-class lesson, ask them to complete their drawings as homework.

Extension Activities:

The Anti-Federalist's Constitution: Ask students to work individually or in pairs to brainstorm alternative Constitutions or amendments that might have completely satisfied Anti-Federalist opinion. Provide "parchment" and "quill" pens (attach large feather from a craft store to a pen)

for students to write out their ideas. Take turns presenting these ideas to the class and vote on the most creative one! Allow the winning student or pair to share their idea with the school by asking the school's office if the students may read their solution over the intercom during announcements or publish their idea in the school newspaper.

Appendix A. Peter Prejudice

(Annotations found in Comments)

[Peter Prejudice: The New Breeches \(April 15, 1788\)](#)

Mr. Editor, I some time since sent a pair of old breeches to a taylor, in order to have them patched; as the breaches, both in front and rear, were very numerous I was obliged to purchase a considerable quantity of cloth wherewith to mend them-Well sir, what do you think the taylor has had the assurance to do? Why, after detaining my breeches upwards of four months, he has presumed to return them unpatched, and has also sent a new pair along with them, and a message, "That upon examining the old pair he had found them so rotten that they were not worth mending, nor could it be easily done, that he had also found that the cloth sent for that purpose was sufficient to make an entire new pair, much better than the old ones had ever been, which he had done accordingly, and hoped for my approbation of his conduct." He added moreover "that if upon trial they should happen to pinch me in any part, he had left a sufficient space for outlets at every seam."

Oh height of insult! said I on receiving this arrogant message, what has this fellow done! A conspiracy! A conspiracy! As sure as I'm alive the traitor, his journeymen, and apprentices have meditated the ruin of my old breeches, and conspired against the liberty of my thighs, knees, and loins, which they have insidiously attempted to confine and cramp by palming this "gilded trap" the new breeches on me, "Curse on the villains!" they have conspired to lay restraints upon my free-born members, which are utterly incompatible with our republican form of government! Here indignation choked my utterance - My dearly beloved - spouse and my little children were all gather'd about me by this time, to know the cause of my anger. It was, however, a considerable while before the boiling madness of my rage was sufficiently calmed for me to give them the information they desired; but my heat being somewhat allayed, I at length deigned to answer their interrogatories.

Well my dear (said my sweet partner) I think you are under many obligations to our good neighbour the taylor, who has rendered you very important services on former occasions; and has certainly consulted your interest in this business; for my part, I highly approve of his conduct, and am well pleased that he has made you these pretty new small clothes, (for she does not like to say breeches) to hide your nakedness, and defend you from the inclemency of the weather. Sure you know how you have been laughed at, wherever you went, this longtime past on account of your old pair, which the neighbours all say, are no better than an Indian's breech-clout; I protest my own modesty has been often put to the blush by the holes in that plaguy old pair-My lovely tormentor was about to proceed in her condemnation of the old pair, and her praises of the new-Hold! hold! said I, let us reason the matter fairly. In the first place, he has disobeyed my orders, which were only that he should repair the old breeches. But has he not made a new pair much preferable to the old? By no means, I replied, these cursed new breeches would utterly ruin me; they are calculated to enslave my thighs, to confine my waist, and totally to destroy the liberty of my knees, by buttoning tightly around them, they will also render a considerable part of my hose totally useless by buckling below my knees; nor is this all, they will imprison my femoral parts nor suffer them

to enjoy fresh air as the old ones do; to be brief they are too long and too short, too strait and too wide, they would Pinch me in all parts, and fit me in none.

Methinks you reason very strangely, my love (replied my solicitous advocate for the new breeches, who was now joined by all the children,) your argument, against being under the restraint and confinement of clothes, is only calculated for a circle of savages, and can never have any weight among civilized and social beings; your objection to the want of breaches in the new pair, for admission of fresh air, is an excellent argument in their favour, and shews that they are well calculated to skreen you from the inclemency of the seasons; your concluding objections are so inconsistent and contradictory, that they fall to the ground without any comment. Further, continued she, if they have faults you know the taylor says they can be easily amended; would not you do well therefore to put them on, in order to ascertain their faults truly, and I shall have no objection to the necessary alterations being made in them.

No, no, said I, "don't think to catch old birds with chaff" I'm determined never to draw them on, unless the amendments shall have been first made. Here again I was replied to-How in the name of goodness, said she, can you undertake to have amendments made, before you know that the parts you would wish to have amended are indeed faulty! By such preposterous doings you might spoil their best parts; but would have no tolerable chance of amending even one fault; therefore, I beg you may first try them on, that you may be enabled to discover their faults with precision. Do papa, do try on your new breeches, exclaimed the children with one voice.

Hush! hush! said I once more, I believe the woman and the children are all crazy! Do you think I am fool enough to be gulled thus! If I should put them on, how shall I be able to get them off again? I have no security that they will not cling to my skin, tear away my flesh, break my bones, and boil my marrow, like Hercules's poisoned shirt, which insidiously destroyed him. And all this must be born, without the liberty of even remonstrating against the tyranny of these accursed" consolidating" breeches. I say consolidating; for they are evidently calculated to supersede the use of every other garment; or at least to" melt them all down into one" general garment; and the taylor certainly intended this to be the case. Do they not already exhibit a specimen of their despotism, by being framed so as to "lord it over" a considerable part of my stockings and shirt? And is it not more than probable, that they would, very speedily, encroach upon the prerogative of all my clothes; nay, that they would even extend their sway to my head, and, by closing my mouth, prevent me from expostulating against my "cruel taskmasters?" With these over my face, for a mask, I should appear no less ridiculous, than a modern fine lady with her head in a calash, or in a fashionable bonnet.

Here the whole family burst into laughter, and the dispute ended for that time. I have reason to expect another attack on the same score shortly; for my wife is exceedingly fond of the new breeches, and is supported by all my neighbours in her controversies with me on this subject. As I am nearly exhausted, I will be much obliged to any of your correspondents who will be so condescending as to favour me with a fresh supply of arguments, sufficient to repel those of my spouse in our next rencountre.

Appendix B. Federalist No. 1

(suggestions for dividing up student reading portions in comments)

[The Federalist No. 1 \(October 27, 1787\)](#)

To the People of the State of New-York.

After an unequivocal experience of the inefficacy of the subsisting Federal Government, you are called upon to deliberate on a new Constitution for the United States of America. The subject speaks its own importance; comprehending in its consequences, nothing less than the existence of the UNION, the safety and welfare of the parts of which it is composed, the fate of an empire, in many respects, the most interesting in the world. It has been frequently remarked, that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not, establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend, for their political constitutions, on accident and force. If there be any truth in the remark, the crisis, at which we are arrived, may with propriety be regarded as the æra in which that decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we shall act, may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind. This idea will add the inducements of philanthropy to those of patriotism to heighten the sollicitude, which all considerate and good men must feel for the event. Happy will it be if our choice should be decided by a judicious estimate of our true interests, unperplexed and unbiassed by considerations not connected with the public good. But this is a thing more ardently to be wished, than seriously to be expected. The plan offered to our deliberations, affects too many particular interests, innovates upon too many local institutions, not to involve in its discussion a variety of objects foreign to its merits, and of views, passions and prejudices little favourable to the discovery of truth.

Among the most formidable of the obstacles which the new Constitution will have to encounter, may readily be distinguished the obvious interests of a certain class of men in every State to resist all changes which may hazard a diminution of the power, emolument and consequence of the offices they hold under the State-establishments-and the perverted ambition of another class of men, who will either hope to aggrandise themselves by the confusions of their country, or will flatter themselves with fairer prospects of elevation from the subdivision of the empire into several partial confederacies, than from its union under one government.

It is not, however, my design to dwell upon observations of this nature. I am well aware that it would be disingenuous to resolve indiscriminately the opposition of any set of men (merely because their situations might subject them to suspicion) into interested or ambitious views: Candour will oblige us to admit, that even such men may be actuated by upright intentions; and it cannot be doubted, that much of the opposition which has made its appearance, or may hereafter

make its appearance, will spring from sources, blameless at least, if not respectable, the honest errors of minds led astray by preconceived jealousies and fears. So numerous indeed and so powerful are the causes, which serve to give a false bias to the judgment, that we upon many occasions, see wise and good men on the wrong as well as on the right side of questions, of the first magnitude to society. This circumstance, if duly attended to, would furnish a lesson of moderation to those, who are ever so much persuaded of their being in the right, in any controversy. And a further reason for caution, in this respect, might be drawn from the reflection, that we are not always sure, that those who advocate the truth are influenced by purer principles than their antagonists. Ambition, avarice, personal animosity, party opposition, and many other motives, not more laudable than these, are apt to operate as well upon those who support as upon those who oppose the right side of a question. Were there not even these inducements to moderation, nothing could be more illjudged than that intolerant spirit, which has, at all times, characterised political parties. For, in politics as in religion, it is equally absurd to aim at making proselytes by fire and sword. Heresies in either can rarely be cured by persecution.

And yet however just these sentiments will be allowed to be, we have already sufficient indications, that it will happen in this as in all former cases of great national discussion. A torrent of angry and malignant passions will be let loose. To judge from the conduct of the opposite parties, we shall be led to conclude, that they will mutually hope to evince the justness of their opinions, and to increase the number of their converts by the loudness of their declamations, and by the bitterness of their invectives. An enlightened zeal for the energy and efficiency of government will be stigmatised, as the offspring of a temper fond of despotic power and hostile to the principles of liberty. An overscrupulous jealousy of danger to the rights of the people, which is more commonly the fault of the head than of the heart, will be represented as mere pretence and artifice; the bait for popularity at the expence of public good. It will be forgotten, on the one hand, that jealousy is the usual concomitant of violent love, and that the noble enthusiasm of liberty is too apt to be infected with a spirit of narrow and illiberal distrust. On the other hand, it will be equally forgotten, that the vigour of government is essential to the security of liberty; that, in the contemplation of a sound and well informed judgment, their interest can never be separated; and that a dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people, than under the forbidding appearance of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government. History will teach us, that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism, than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics the greatest number have begun their career, by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing Demagogues and ending Tyrants.

In the course of the preceding observations I have had an eye, my Fellow Citizens, to putting you upon your guard against all attempts, from whatever quarter, to influence your decision in a matter of the utmost moment to your welfare by any impressions other than those which may result from the evidence of truth. You will, no doubt, at the same time, have collected from the general scope of them that they proceed from a source not unfriendly to the new Constitution.

Yes, my Countrymen, I own to you, that, after having given it an attentive consideration, I am dearly of opinion, it is your interest to adopt it I am convinced, that this is the safest course for your liberty, your dignity, and your happiness. I affect not reserves, which I do not feel I will not amuse you with an appearance of deliberation, when I have decided. I frankly acknowledge to you my convictions, and I will freely lay before you the reasons on which they are founded. The consciousness of good intentions disdains ambiguity. I shall not however multiply professions on this head. My motives must remain in the depository of my own breast: My arguments will be open to all, and may be judged of by all. They shall at least be offered in a spirit, which will not disgrace the cause of truth.

I propose in a series of papers to discuss the following interesting particulars-

The utility of the UNION to your political prosperity-The insufficiency of the present Confederation to preserve that Union-The necessity of a government at least equally energetic with the one proposed to the attainment of this object-The conformity of the proposed Constitution to the true principles - republican government-Its analogy to your own state constitution-and lastly, The additional security, which its adoption will afford to the preservation of that species of government, to liberty and to property.

In the progress of this discussion I shall endeavour to give a satisfactory answer to all the objections which shall have made their appearance that may seem to have any claim to your attention.

It may perhaps be thought superfluous to offer arguments to prove the utility of the UNION, a point, no doubt, deeply engraved on the hearts of the great body of the people in every state, and one, which it may be imagined has no adversaries. But the fact is, that we already hear it whispered in the private circles of those who oppose the new constitution, that the Thirteen States are of too great extent for any general system, and that we must of necessity resort to separate confederacies of distinct portions of the whole. (a) This doctrine will, in all probability, be gradually propagated, till it has votaries enough to countenance an open avowal of it. For nothing can be more evident, to those who are able to take an enlarged view of the subject, than the alternative of adoption of the new Constitution, or a dismemberment of the Union. It will theretofore be of use to begin by examining the advantages of that Union, the certain evils and the probable dangers, to which every State will be exposed from its dissolution. This shall accordingly constitute the subject of my next address.

PUBLIUS.

(a) The same idea, tracing the arguments to their consequences, is held out in several of the late publications against the New Constitution.